CHAPTER 8: ELF VS. THE PALMTOP RABBIT

IT'S A CARROT TOWER...
BAM
He He! ♪
It's amazing!

WE DID IT!
FINALLY, A TOWER OF CARROTS!
SHOULD WE JUST DIVE IN?
KYAH!
THD
THD
THD
THD
THD
THD
WOO HOO!
STILL...
Tumble
Tumble

I DON'T KNOW IF WE'LL BE ABLE TO GET THROUGH ALL THESE . . .
I GUESS WE SHOULD SELL A FEW.
NO WAY! ABSO-LUTELY NOT!
OUROBOROS SAID OUR CARROTS COULD GO FOR A LOT OF MONEY.
THE OFFERING BOX PRICES ARE A SCAM, AND I'D KINDA LIKE HAVING A STEADY INCOME.
B-BUT!
PLEASE, JUST THINK OF IT AS AN INVESTMENT.
I CAN MAKE WHOLE POTS OF CREAM STEW WITH THE MONEY THESE CAN MAKE US.

HM? WHAT'S CREAM STEW?
GOT 'EM.
IT'S A FOOD THAT GOES REALLY WELL WITH CARROTS.
CURRY, TOO?
ABSO-LUTELY.
Shine
ONLY... ONLY THE LEFT-OVERS, OKAY?
NICE, THAT WAS EASY. SHE'S SO CUTE.

Creak
Ouroboros.
Could you pull some strings with the demon... I mean, Cornelia, and arrange the sale of some carrots in the magic realm?
As you wish, master.
Bow
If I am to head to Cornelia-sama's mansion, I shall depart in the evening.
That sounds good, thanks.
Some business has come up, so I leave the house in your care, Maria.
Under-stood.
This should be good...
Wow...

OUROBOROS HAS BEEN HANDLING ALL THE HOUSEWORK EVER SINCE SHE ARRIVED.
NOW THAT MARIA'S HAD MORE FREE TIME ON HER HANDS, SHE'S BEEN HELPING ME WITH THE FARM, WHICH HAS SPED THINGS UP A LITTLE.
SONIA'S STILL A NEET, OF COURSE.
I GUESS THAT, IF ANYTHING, HER JOB AS QUEEN JUST INVOLVES BEARING CHILDREN...
Roll
AND SHE'S CERTAINLY NOT SLACKING OFF IN THAT DEPARTMENT.
THERE'S JUST NO KEEPING UP WITH A RABBIT HIGH ON DRAGON LIVER...

ZOOM
ONE THING, MASTER...
AS YOU ARE GOOD FRIENDS WITH CORNELIA-SAMA, I DO NOT BELIEVE SHE WOULD CHARGE YOU...
BUT YOU MUST STILL PAY A TARIFF ON ANY GOODS BROUGHT INTO THE MAGIC WORLD.
THERE ARE MANY RESTRIC-TIONS ON TRADE WITH THE HUMAN WORLD...
AND THE CUSTOMS OFFICE ALWAYS MAINTAINS A WATCHFUL EYE OVER ANY AND ALL DEALINGS.
M
H
ATTEMPT TO BYPASS THEM, AND YOU WILL BE MURDERED IN AN INSTANT.
SHOCK
GETTING RIPPED OFF DOESN'T SEEM SO BAD ANY-MORE...
IN ANY CASE, WHILE THAT'LL HAVE TO DO FOR NOW...
SHOULD WE SELL THEM IN A HUMAN TOWN NEXT TIME?
Twitch
Twitch
Twitch

ASK...
AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE!
SLAM
WHOA, ARISA...
I DON'T THINK I HAVE ANY MATERIALS FOR YOU TODAY.
OH, I AIN'T TALKIN' BOUT THAT!
I WANT IN ON THAT JUICY CONVO YOU WERE HAVIN'!
DO YOU THINK WE'D HAVE ANY LUCK MAKING MONEY OFF THE CARROTS?
WELL, THEY AIN'T MY SPECIALTY SO I COULDN'T SAY FOR SURE, BUT...

REMEMBER THE CHERRY TOMATOES YA LET ME TRY?
THEY WERE SWEETER THAN APPLES.
SAME GOES FOR THE REST OF YOUR VEGE-TABLES!
ALL OF THEM?!
IF I HAD TO SAY, PROBABLY!
WATCHIN' YOU USE YOUR SEED CREATION SKILL, I REALIZED...
YA CAN CHANGE ANYTHIN' YA WANT, MAKIN' 'EM SWEETER, FIRMER, ADDIN' FIBER, YOU NAME IT.
Sweet
Soft
Firm
Bitter
Fibrous
Seed creation
Sweet
Soft
Firm
Bitter
Firm
Seed creation
IF YA CONSIDER HOW RARE THAT IS, YA COULD END UP TRADIN' WITH NOBLE GOURMANDS . . .
AND THEN YA'D GET THE MONEY THEY'RE REALLY WORTH.

DAMN, NO WAY...
SO, HOW ABOUT I LET YOU HANDLE SELLING MY VEGETABLES FROM NOW ON?
I CAN'T DO THAT.
SLUMP
AW, MAN. NOTHING'S EVER EASY, HUH?
I'VE GOT ENOUGH ON JUST CARRYIN' MONSTER HIDE, BONE, AND THE LIKE, YA KNOW?
OH, RIGHT. I FORGOT THIS FOREST WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A SUPER DIFFICULT DUNGEON.
I'D HAVE TO HIRE SOME HIGH-RANK ADVENTURERS AS GUARDS...
AND I COULDN'T NOT CHARGE EXTRA FOR THAT, NOT EVEN FOR YOU.
NOT VERY CONVINCING, COMING FROM A SCAMMER.
I THOUGHT WE'D PUT THAT BEHIND US.
FWSH
HMM... SO, IT'S THE MAGIC REALM'S MIDDLEMAN...
OR EXTRA FEES IN THE HUMAN REALM...

AH.
HOW ABOUT SELLING TO THE ELVES?
PMF
THAT'S IT!
THEY'RE ALL VEGE-TARIANS!
YA COULD SET THE PRICES SKY HIGH AND THEY'D STILL WANNA BUY YOUR VEGE-TABLES!
THEY'RE ALWAYS SELLIN' ENCHANTED ITEMS TO HUMANS FOR A LOTTA MONEY, SO I'M SURE THEY'VE GOT PLENTY SAVED UP!
ARE YOU SURE?

THE ELVES ARE AN EXCLUSIONARY PEOPLE.
THEY ARE KNOWN FOR BEING RECLUSIVE "SAGES OF THE FOREST", AVOIDING ANY AND ALL UNNECESSARY CONTACT WITH THE HUMAN OR MAGIC REALMS.
WOULD THEY REALLY BE SO QUICK TO ACCEPT A NEW TRADE DEAL?
IT'S FINE, IT'LL ONLY TAKE A LITTLE OF MY NEGOTIATIN' SKILLS...
AND MISTER TATSUYA'S VEGGIES WILL SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES!
HANG ON, NEGOTIATING SKILLS?
YOU'RE GONNA GO TALK TO THEM?
OF COURSE!
THE ONLY OTHER PEOPLE HERE ARE A NAIVE PALMTOP RABBIT...
AND A PAIR OF NOBLES FROM THE MAGIC REALM.

I'M THE ONLY ORDINARY ONE AROUND!
SHE AIN'T WRONG.
AND I DON'T KNOW A THING ABOUT THIS WORLD, EITHER...
FINE...
I'LL LEAVE NEGOTIA-TIONS TO YOU.
DON'T WORRY, YOU'RE IN THE BESTEST HANDS AROUND!
THAT SAID...
I'LL BE TAKIN' A FEE FOR THIS!
STILL HAVEN'T LEARNED, HUH?
I AIN'T SCAMMIN' NO ONE!

THE NEXT DAY.
House-sitting.
WHEE, A WALK!
WHEN DO WE GET TO EAT THE CARROT SNACKS?
COMMANDER, BOAR SPOTTED! WHAT ARE YOUR ORDERS?

We re taking a break from hunting today~!
Woo Hoo
Geez...
Are they even capable of feeling nervous?
Mister Tatsuya, look.
We're here.

THAT'S... REALLY SOME-THING.
IT'S MORE OF A FOREST FORTRESS THAN A TOWN.
WELL, ELVES ARE FIGHTERS.
HM?

W-WE'RE UNDER ATTACK!
A GROUP OF PALMTOP RABBITS ARE INVADING!
HIDE THEM!
DUM
HIDE THEM ALL!
DUM
DUM
EVERY SINGLE CARROT!
DUM
PREPARE TO COUNTER-ATTACK!
DUM
UM... SONIA-SAN?
WHAT IS IT?
HAVE YOU EVER... DONE ANYTHING TO THE ELVES?

Well, they do call us...
The forest's foremost ankle-biting gang!
HUH?
ELVEN CARROTS ARE REALLY GOOD!
THAT'S WHY WE RUSH ELF CAMPS AS A COMING OF AGE RITUAL!
SO IT'S YOUR FAULT FOR STEALING FROM THEM!

GUH...
NOT GOOD... I REALLY DIDN'T THINK THIS THROUGH.
IT'S JUST THEY'RE ALWAYS SO GENTLE AND NICE TO ME...
I'D FOR-GOTTEN ALL ABOUT THEIR REPU-TATION AS MURDEROUS GLUTTONS.
HM?
VWOOM
MARIA... WHAT'S THAT?
!!!

VWM!!
VWM
VWM
VWM
VWM
VWM
VWM
VWM
VWM
VWM
MAGIC RITE ATTACK INCOMING!
BWOOSH

SHWP
WOOSH
WHUHH ?!
WOOSH
WOOSH
WOOSH
HOW DID IT TURN OUT LIKE THIS?!
Grip
WE JUST CAME TO TALK!

KRAK
KRAK
!
WHAT IS...
THIS
FEELING?

LIKE MY BODY'S MOVING ON ITS OWN...
BUT I KNOW EXACTLY HOW TO MOVE!
NO, I'M DEFINITELY THE ONE DOING THIS...
I FEEL SO LIGHT!
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE

Wsh
Wsh
Wsh
THNK
THNK
THNK
THNK

WSH
WSH
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE THAT GOOD...
I'M A SKINNER BY TRADE, BUT YA CAN'T GO WANDERIN' 'ROUND THESE FORESTS...
WITHOUT KNOWIN' HOW TO FIGHT!

NOW...
JUST ONE LITTLE PROBLEM.
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
TATSUYA-SAMA! THAT'S A RITUAL SPELL, CAST BY DOZENS OF ELVEN MAGES.
NOT EVEN SONIA OR I COULD STOP IT WITH-OUT...
I'VE GOT THIS.
!

MY FARMING TOOL PRO-FICIENCY...
IS GONNA SHOW ME THE WAY.
DASH
SHP
SHP

WOOSH
THERE!
SWOOSH

Drip
COME ON...
IT'S JUST GONE?
STMP
WHAT THE HELL'S WITH THIS SKILL?
W-WHA...
YOU'RE KIDDING...
Murmur
Murmur
HE SWEPT AWAY OUR ELITE RITUAL SPELL 18...
WITHOUT SO MUCH AS AN ELEMENTAL WEAPON?!
Murmur
Murmur

Grab
AMAZING! YOU'RE AMAZING, TATSUYA!
IMPRESSIVE AS EVER, TATSUYA-SAMA.
I THOUGHT OF CASTING A PROTECTIVE SPELL...
BUT EVEN THAT WOULD NOT HAVE FULLY COVERED ALL OF US.
OUR GOD IS COME~!
THE GOD OF BATTLE~!
SO, THERE'S MORE TO HIM THAN JUST CARROTS...
I'LL FOLLOW YOU TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD, ANIKI~!
IT'S YOU LOT'S FAULT WE'RE IN THIS MESS!
Flick
OWIE... THAT HURT...

BAM

....!
SLUMP

CRAP...
SHE'S HERE.
THE ELF QUEEN.
SHE'S A SCARY ONE!
THIS IS REALLY, REALLY BAD! IT'S HOPELESS!
COMMANDER! REQUESTING PERMISSION TO RUN!
HE HE, LITTLE ONES...
PER-MISSION GRANTED.
HOW-EVER...

ONLY IF YOU RUN...
TOWARDS THE ENEMY.
EEK!
THAT'S EVIL!
WE'RE STUCK IN A FAIL STATE!
CAPTAIN EVIL IS COME!
THIS IS REALLY, CRAPPING BAD!
Whisper
Whisper
Whisper
Whisper
THEY'RE REALLY ITCHING TO FLEE, HUH?
Glance
Glance

I CAN SEE WHY, THOUGH. IT'S NOT QUITE AT CORNELIA'S LEVEL...
BUT I FEEL A LOT OF POWER COMING FROM THAT BEAUTY.
WAIT, WHY ARE WE EVEN FIGHTING HER?!
I THOUGHT YOU GUYS WERE PEACEFUL WHEN CARROTS WEREN'T INVOLVED!
THAT ELF IS CRAZY ABOUT CARROTS, TOO.
VEGETARIANS TAKE THEIR GREENS VERY SERIOUSLY.
ONE TIME, HER ARMIES RAIDED OUR WARREN AND STOLE OUR CARROTS WHILE WE WERE OUT.
WASN'T SHE JUST TAKING BACK WHAT YOU'D STOLEN?!
HALF WERE THE ELVES', BUT WE GOT THE OTHER HALF FROM NOBLES OF THE MAGIC REALM.

GLOOM
WHY DID YOU HAVE TO STEAL FROM ALL THE WORST PLACES?
NO WONDER THEY'RE SO HOS-TILE...
NOW WE RE-MEMBER!
ONE DAY, ALL OUR CARROTS JUST UP AND VANISHED!
NOT GONNA LIE, I WAS DEPRESSED AS SHIT!
SO THAT'S THE BITCH WHO ROBBED US, HUH?!
SHE'S GOT SOME FUCKIN' BALLS, I'LL GIVE HER THAT!
THAT COW OUGHTA KNOW WHAT HAPPENS TO PEOPLE WHO SCREW WITH OUR CARROTS!
THIS AIN'T ABOUT WINNIN' OR LOSIN'!
IF WE DIE TODAY, WE'RE DRAGGIN' THAT MOTHER-FUCKER DOWN WITH US!
FUCK AROUND AND FIND OUT, YA HEAR ME?!
MESS HER UP, GIRLS!
I GUESS THEY SNAPPED.

WHY'D THEIR ACCENT CHANGE, THOUGH?
HEY, WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE.
...
SO, BOTH SIDES OF THIS ARE JUST OBSESSED WITH VEGETA-BLES.
THAT'S NOT QUITE IT, TATSUYA-SAMA.
THAT MAY BE TRUE OF SONIA AND THE RABBITS, BUT THE ELVES ARE NO FOOLS.
THEIR FOOD STORES ENSURE THE SURVIVAL OF THEIR FAMILIES, SO ALLOWING THEMSELVES TO BE ATTACKED HERE MAY BE PART OF A LARGER PLAN FROM THEIR MILITARY.
YOU KNOW YOU JUST CASUALLY INSULTED SONIA, RIGHT? BUT YEAH, I GET IT.
THE PALMTOP RABBITS AND THEIR QUEEN...
A NOBLE FROM THE MAGIC REALM...
AND A MYSTERIOUS, HOE-WIELDING HUMAN?

I FEEL A GREAT WAVE OF POWER EMANATING FROM YOU...
ON PAR WITH THAT OF THE DEMON LORD, CORNELIA.
MYSTERIOUS HUMAN.
THE PALMTOP RABBIT QUEEN AND HER SUBJECTS NOW RIVAL OUR VILLAGE'S OWN MIGHT.
WITH YOU AND THE NOBLE-WOMAN ON THEIR SIDE...
WE STAND LITTLE CHANCE OF WINNING.
HMM...

BASED ON WHAT SHE JUST SAID, COULD THE POWER RANKING...
LOOK KINDA LIKE THIS?
(?)
Unsurmountable wall
Unsurmountable wall
It's fun to think about.
Not even counted by the elf queen.
Confirmed
IF WE ARE TO FALL...
WE WOULD DO SO AS WARRIORS.
THEREFORE I CHALLENGE YOU, THE STRONGEST AMONG YOU, TO A DUEL!

IF YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A FELLOW WARRIOR, YOU WILL UNDERSTAND MY HONOR!
NO, I'M A FARMER, ACTUALLY.
DON'T THINK I COULD TELL HER THAT, THOUGH.
YOUR HOE WAS NOT MADE FOR THE LAND, BUT RATHER TO PLOW MY HEAD!
THAT'S ONE HELL OF A ME-TAPHOR.

HOLD ON A MINUTE!
WE DIDN'T COME HERE TO FIGHT!
JUST HEAR ME OUT!
OUR BATTLE HAS ALREADY BEGUN.
ONCE SET IN MOTION, A WAR CAN END ONLY IN BLOODSHED!
...
UGH, FINE.
CHK
I'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE YOU LISTEN ONCE I BEAT YOU.
HOW DARE YOU...

DO NOT DELLUDE YOURSELF THAT YOU HAVE ALREADY WON!
Grp
CRACKLE
ZWOOSH

FOUR ARROWS IN ONE SHOT?!
ONE TO THE HEAD, TWO TO THE TORSO, ONE TO THE LEG
YOU'RE NOT HALF BAD...
WOOSH
BUT YOU UNDERESTIMATE ME!
SNAP

DASH
!
THIS IS IT!
CLOSE THE DISTANCE ON A RANGED ATTACKER, AND THEY'RE FINISHED!

FLASH
WHO IS UNDER-ESTIMATING WHOM?!
HOLY GREEN FLARE!
?!

ZWOM

TATSUYA-SAMA, WATCH OUT!
THE STRONGHOLD DEFENSE RITUAL SPELL, TEN YEARS IN THE MAKING!
NOT EVEN A DEMON LORD COULD ESCAPE UNSCATHED!
BEHOLD OUR VILLAGE'S ULTIMATE TECHNI-QUE...
AND BURN!

YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO TELL ME...
GETTING HIT BY THAT IS BAD NEWS. BUT I DON'T THINK I CAN...
BWOOOM
MAKE... IT...

Skill: Farming level 10, activating.

KRAK
KRAK
I CAN FEEL IT!
THE POWER!
KRAK
KRAK
KRAK
KRAK
KRAK
KRAK
WHAT?!
KRAK

IMPOSSI-BLE!
THOSE MOVEMENTS ARE INHUMAN! JUST WHO EXACTLY ARE YOU?!

SWOOSH

NO...
A WARRIOR MUST ALWAYS...
ACCEPT DEFEAT WITH DIGNITY.
Clok

I...
LOST.
NOW, KILL ME.

I NEVER WANTED TO FIGHT YOU.
Shake
Shake
I CAME HERE TO EARN YOUR FRIENDSHIP.
FRIEND-SHIP?
WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING BEHIND THAT THINLY VEILED EXCUSE?!
I AM NOT SUCH A FOOL AS TO BE DECEIVED BY SIMPLE CAJOLERY!

L-LISTEN!
JUST HAVE A TASTE OF MY CARROT AND WE'LL BE BEST FRIENDS!
FLUSH
YOUR... CARROT?! YOU VILE CUR!
KUH...
JUST KILL ME!
I REFUSE TO BE SULLIED BY THE LIKES OF YOU!
HMM... I THINK SHE MIGHT HAVE MISUNDER-STOOD.